



Transfer: Making It Happen Program – An Evaluation

- ♦ *While anecdotal information is available concerning the effectiveness of the Transfer: Making It Happen program, CPEC finds that insufficient quantitative fiscal and outcome information is available to assess the program.*
- ♦ *CPEC is unable to determine the success and effectiveness of this program and is unable to comment on whether it should be continued or expanded.*
- ♦ *If the Governor and the Legislature wish to continue the program beyond its current December 31, 2005, sunset date, CPEC offers three recommendations.*

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The Commission advises the Governor and Legislature on higher education policy and fiscal issues. Its primary focus is to ensure that the state's educational resources are used effectively to provide Californians with postsecondary education opportunities. More information about the Commission is available at www.cpec.ca.gov.

Draft Commission Report

Findings and Recommendations

California Education Code Section 69561.5 requires the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC), in consultation with the Legislative Analyst's Office, to conduct an evaluation of the *Transfer: Making It Happen* program. CPEC is required to report the findings and recommendations of its evaluation to the Governor and Legislature by no later than December 1, 2004. This report is prepared by CPEC in response to that statutory requirement.

While the program's administrators have provided anecdotal information concerning the effectiveness of the *Transfer: Making It Happen* program, CPEC finds that insufficient quantitative fiscal and outcome information was collected about the program. For example, the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) – the administrator for this program – is unable to provide complete information about expenditures for project-related activities and it is also unable to provide complete data on the number of project participants that ultimately transferred from a California Community College to a baccalaureate degree-granting institution – the legislative intent of the program. Given this lack of data, CPEC is unable to determine the success and effectiveness of the program and it is unable to comment on whether it should be continued or expanded in the future.

Despite insufficient information about the effectiveness of the program, should the Governor and Legislature wish to continue the program beyond the current December 31, 2005, sunset date, CPEC recommends that:

- ♦ Existing law should be amended to require specific fiscal and outcome data be collected by CSAC enabling policymakers to determine whether the program has been successful in increasing the number of community college students who transfer to baccalaureate-degree

granting institutions. For example, project expenditure data should be collected to permit an analysis of the cost effectiveness of the program. Similarly, data on the number of project participants that ultimately transfer from a California Community College to a baccalaureate-degree granting institution should also be collected given that this is the legislative goal of the program;

- ♦ If the program is continued, State law should be amended to require a periodic evaluation of the program's success and effectiveness. Further, fiscal resources should be earmarked for this evaluation to ensure that a comprehensive examination of the program is conducted; and
- ♦ The Governor and Legislature might wish to re-consider whether the program is best administered by CSAC as a component of the California Student Opportunity and Access Program, or whether it might be more effectively administered by the California Community College Chancellor's Office through existing community college transfer centers.

Background

In August 2000, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 1898, authored by Senator Solis, creating the *Transfer: Making It Happen* program. SB 1898 was signed by the Governor in September 2000, became law in January 2001, and is codified as Education Code Section 69561.5. A copy of the law appears as Appendix A to this report. This law requires the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) to develop and implement a pilot program entitled *Transfer: Making It Happen*. The purpose of the program is to assist community college students who are planning to transfer to a baccalaureate degree-granting institution by providing them with academic preparation services and information on financial aid opportunities. The law directs CSAC to work in collaboration with the various segments of higher education to develop and implement this program. It also requires CPEC to submit an evaluation of this pilot program to the Governor and the Legislature by December 1, 2004. Finally, the law requires that the pilot program be repealed as of January 1, 2006, unless subsequently authorized by the Legislature.

Senate Bill 1898 also included legislative intent language specifying that up to \$1.5 million of the 2000 Fiscal Year appropriation for the California Student Opportunity and Access Program (Cal-SOAP) Program could be used to implement the *Transfer: Making It Happen* pilot program.

The law implicitly required CSAC to use Cal-SOAP to provide the academic preparation and financial aid information required in the new law. As such, the *Transfer: Making It Happen* program became a new component of the existing Cal-SOAP program.

What is Cal-SOAP?

In 1978, the State Legislature established the California Student Opportunity and Access Program, also commonly known as Cal-SOAP. The primary purpose of Cal-SOAP is to improve the flow of information about postsecondary education and financial aid opportunities while raising the achievement levels of low-income, elementary and secondary school students or students in geographic regions with documented low-eligibility or college participation rates, and who are first in their families to attend college. Today, Cal-SOAP projects operate in 16 locations throughout the state by consortia made up of secondary schools, colleges, universities, and local community agencies. During 2003-04, Cal-SOAP estimates that it will provide information and outreach services to more than 142,000 elementary, secondary, and community college students and their parents.

Current Cal-SOAP projects include: Central Coast (Santa Maria), Central Valley (San Joaquin), East Bay (Oakland and Richmond), Los Angeles, Merced, North Coast (Eureka), North Valley (Yuba), Sacramento College Horizons, San Diego/Imperial, San Francisco, San Jose, Santa Barbara, South Coast (Whittier), South County Gilroy, South San Joaquin, and SUCCESS (Solano).

Because each Cal-SOAP project specializes in serving students within its local community, the type of programs and services often differ. However, the projects share the common goal of improving the flow of information about postsecondary education and financial aid, while raising achievement levels of targeted students. Some common services provided by most of the consortia include advising, tutoring, parent outreach, and college awareness workshops.

CSAC is responsible for administration and oversight of Cal-SOAP. Each individual Cal-SOAP consortium annually applies to CSAC for continued funding. State law requires that each Cal-SOAP consortium provide local resources to match CSAC's allocation of funding. In 2004-05, these matching resources exceeded \$8 million. CSAC solicits input and advice about administering the program through a 12-member, statutorily required advisory committee.

Statewide, Cal-SOAP has extensive intersegmental participation, including:

- ♦ Eighty-one public school districts, both large and small;
- ♦ Some 40 individual public high schools;
- ♦ Nine University of California campuses;
- ♦ Twenty of the 23 California State University campuses;
- ♦ Thirty-nine of the state's 109 California Community Colleges;
- ♦ Nineteen of the 71 members of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities; and
- ♦ Forty-seven other local, community-based organizations.

Transfer: Making It Happen

What We Know and What We Don't Know

CSAC requested information from each of the Cal-SOAP consortia concerning their *Transfer: Making It Happen* activities, participants, and expenditures. Appendix B of this document presents this information as submitted by CSAC staff for the 2001-02, 2002-03, and 2003-04 fiscal years. In addition, Appendix C of this document presents additional information submitted by CSAC and the Cal-SOAP program. With limited time and resources, CPEC staff did not verify or validate the accuracy of this information.

Types of activities

Each Cal-SOAP project provides a different array of *Transfer: Making It Happen* activities that is tailored to meet the needs of students within their local communities. The type of services and the frequency with which they are provided depend on the staff and resources available. Most of the projects ensure that the program participants receive services through multiple activities. For example:

- ♦ The East Bay Cal-SOAP conducts over 15 one-hour workshops for community college students;
- ♦ The Merced Cal-SOAP provides one-on-one counseling to 12 students per week;
- ♦ The Northcoast Cal-SOAP assigns two peer transfer assistants to meet on average six times per year with each participant;
- ♦ The South County Gilroy Cal-SOAP conducts a minimum of five group activities and three to 35 one-on-one counseling sessions for each participant; and

- ♦ Over the three years of the pilot program, the San Diego Cal-SOAP has made 65 home visits, provided 100 peer advising sessions per year, made 100 follow-up phone calls per year, and conducted numerous campus tours, college fairs, and FAFSA workshops for program participants.

Other examples of the types of activities provided under the *Transfer: Making It Happen* banner include: individual and group counseling; workshops and seminars to disseminate information about the transfer process and its requirements; personal development courses; college tours; academic advising sessions; tutoring services; career exploration activities; residential programs; summer bridge programs; and peer advising and mentoring services. A more complete listing of the *Transfer: Making It Happen* activities provided by each of the Cal-SOAP consortia is presented in Appendices B and C.

Project participants

Given that the goal of the *Transfer: Making It Happen* program is to increase the number of community college students who transfer to a baccalaureate degree-granting institution, it is logical that community colleges are most important participants in this effort.

Approximately one-third of California's 109 community colleges have participated in the *Transfer: Making It Happen* program. The California Community Colleges that are or have participated in *Transfer: Making It Happen* activities include: Alan Hancock, American River, Antelope Valley, Bakersfield, Butte, Cerro Coso, City College of San Francisco, College of the Redwoods, Contra Costa, Cuyamaca, East Los Angeles, Gavilan, Grossmont, Los Angeles City, Los Angeles Southwest, Los Angeles Trade-Tech, Merced, Merritt, MiraCosta, Napa Valley, Palomar, Sacramento City College, San Diego City, San Diego Miramar, Santa Barbara City, Solano, Taft, and Yuba.

In the 2001-02 fiscal year, the Cal-SOAP projects estimate that they provided approximately 4,100 high school and community college students and, in some cases, their parents with varying levels of academic assistance and information to facilitate transferring from a community college to a baccalaureate degree-granting institution. The extent of services provided to project participants varied and is not fully known. For the 2002-03 fiscal year, the Cal-SOAP projects estimate that they provided similar services to about 3,300 participants and, in the 2003-04 fiscal year, they estimate they served nearly 5,800 individuals.

Coordination with other transfer initiatives

According to CSAC, in order to foster and maintain a positive relationship, each Cal-SOAP project collaborates with its local California Community College transfer center.

For example, the East Bay Cal-SOAP consortium reported that their *Transfer: Making It Happen* activities were provided through the Transfer/Career Center at Contra Costa College. The East Bay Cal-SOAP consortium provided two Transfer Peer Advisors to offer peer advising and outreach. These activities were planned and implemented in coordination with staff from the community college Transfer Center.

Some other examples of collaboration between Cal-SOAP and other transfer initiatives include:

- ♦ Cal-SOAP staff members are placed directly in the community college transfer offices to provide direct services to students;
- ♦ Cal-SOAP staff members provide workshops and Transfer Day events in coordination with the transfer office and other outreach programs (TRIO, EOP&S, PUENTE, MESA); and
- ♦ Cal-SOAP receives in-kind support from community college transfer offices including office space, phone usage, copying, supplies, etc.

Expenditures for project activities

In its oversight and administration of the *Transfer: Making It Happen* program, CSAC provides a single allocation of funds to each Cal-SOAP project for all project-related activities – including both traditional Cal-SOAP and *Transfer: Making It Happen* activities. CSAC did not provide a separate allocation of funds to each Cal-SOAP project for the *Transfer: Making It Happen* program. As such, no fiscal data are available about the total amount of resources expended specifically for program activities. While several of the Cal-SOAP consortia have provided CSAC with estimates of their expenditures for program activities, data for all consortia are not available. Thus, CPEC is unable to determine the total fiscal resources that have been devoted to the program. This means that it is unclear whether all of the \$1.5 million appropriated by the Legislature was used for the *Transfer: Making It Happen* program.

Project outcomes

While CSAC did not require each Cal-SOAP consortium to collect information about the number of *Transfer: Making It Happen* program participants who transferred from a community college to a baccalaureate degree-granting institution, some Cal-SOAP projects did collect such information.

For example, the Los Angeles Cal-SOAP reported the following information regarding students who transferred from a community college to a four-year institution:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Transfers</u>
2001-2002	71
2002-2003	83
2003-2004	16 (This number does not include data from East Los Angeles College or Los Angeles City College)

Similarly, the North Valley Cal-SOAP reported the following transfer statistics as evidence of its success:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Project Participants</u>	<u>Participants who Transferred</u>
2001-2002	30	8
2002-2003	36	15
2003-2004	160	57

Transfer information from the other 14 Cal-SOAP consortia was not available. Thus, CPEC is unable to determine how effective the program has been in meeting its legislative intent to increase the number of community college students who transfer.

Other measures of success

While the Northcoast Cal-SOAP consortium did not offer data on the number of students who transferred, information was provided concerning the success and retention of their participants. The Northcoast Cal-SOAP consortium reports that it measures its success in terms of participants who complete their educational plans and continue their enrollment. For example, in 2003-2004, 50% of the project participants completed their educational plans compared to 27% for the entire College of the Redwoods student body. For the same year, the retention rate for project participants was 81% compared to only 40% for that college's entire student body.

Organizational Placement of the Program

Existing State law requires this evaluation to recommend how the program may be expanded beyond those community colleges that participate in one of the Cal-SOAP consortia. During discussions with

representatives of CSAC and the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) about this evaluation of the *Transfer: Making It Happen* program, the LAO staff asked if the program would be more effective in increasing the number of transfer students if it were administered by the California Community College Chancellor's Office. The LAO staff suggested that the Community College Chancellor's Office administration of the program might result in the program being better coordinated with and informed by other transfer efforts currently administered by that office. They noted that if the Legislature wishes to expand the program to community colleges not participating in Cal-SOAP, an administrative shift of the program to the California Community Chancellor's Office could better facilitate such an expansion.

CPEC staff agrees with the Legislative Analyst staff's comments that the administrative entity for the program should be reconsidered if the Governor and Legislature decide to continue the program beyond its current December 31, 2005, sunset date.

CSAC Comments on This Evaluation

CPEC staff provided CSAC with an opportunity to review and comment on this evaluation. Appendix D of this document contains CSAC's comments.